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THE MYSTERY OF THE SAMPO

*Smith Ilmarinen
at the third day's end
leaned over to look
at his forge's underside
saw the Sampo being born
the bright-lid growing.*

The Sampo poems are the most studied and explored elements of the Kalevala (1), the Finnish-Karelian national epic, which is the main mythological source of the Finno-Ugrian peoples. The Kalevala grew out of a rich oral tradition. It has prehistoric roots, but it also contains lots of medieval and later material.

The Kalevala was assembled by the Finnish scholar Elias Lönnrot (1803 - 1884) and published in its final form in 1849. Elias Lönnrot with his assistants collected the songs that he used in composing the Kalevala by writing them down from the dictation of singers of the epic. Then Lönnrot edited this oral poetry to form a continuous narrative in the manner of the Iliad and the Odyssey of Homer. The central narrative of the epic concerns the changing relations between Kalevala and Pohjola (Northland).

Most likely there has never been a country called Kalevala in Finland or in Fenno-Scandinavia, so scientifically speaking the Kalevala epic is not a document of the ancient world but a compilation of separate oral tradition put together by Lönnrot. In spite of that the Kalevala contains genuine myths from the past that have been proved reliable by scientific methods. So we can use it as a historical source but with caution.

What was the Sampo?

*He forged the Sampo with skill:
on one side there's a corn mill
on the second a salt mill
a money mill on the third.
And then the new Sampo ground
and the bright-lid rocked;
ground a binful at twilight
one binful to eat
another it ground to sell
and a third to store at home.*

The Sampo is often mentioned in the Kalevala. It was created or forged by Ilmarinen, the eternal Smith and god, and it was deposited in Louhi's Pohjola, where Louhi, a dragon-like woman of intimidating powers reigned.

What was this mystical Sampo? This has been an eternal question in Finland among the scientists and laymen. There are some identification marks of the Sampo, which are accepted by almost all researchers. They are:

- 1) The Sampo produced wealth,
- 2) it was also called "kirjokansi" (=bright-lid, brightly-coloured cover or a lid of many colors), which also means heaven,
- 3) it was a thing that was forged or created, and it was later

carried into the boat, where it broke to pieces,
 4) it had cosmic connections,
 5) it had also a connection to the sea,
 and 6) it meant a statue or a mill, which cover was said to revolve or grind and it had three sides.

There are also many other suggestions put forth to describe the Sampo that are more controversial like that the Sampo had some kind of roots; or that it was a chest (maybe a treasure chest or a jewelry box); or a frog or a turtle or a turtle's back (a purely technical object on which a revolving axis rested); or the sun itself; or the vault of heaven; or the axis mundi, the axle of the world attached at the top to the North Star, sometimes referred to as "the navel of the North", around which the entire world revolves. It is said in the Kalevala that its installation was behind nine locks within the Mount of Copper. Does anybody know where the Mount of Copper is?

The scholars have divided these explanations to three categories: first the cosmological, second the historical and third the abstractive. Nowadays there are also many combinations of these explanations. The options are virtually endless.

Most scholars today hold that the Sampo was a fertility symbol, worshipped in order to secure good crops, harvests, safety for livestock, continued prosperity for human beings, magic powers, beauty and happiness. A very popular explanation is also that the Sampo was a mill, as it was told in the Kalevala. This explanation is strengthened by the similarity between the Sampo descriptions and the Scandinavian story of Grotti, a magic mill owned by king Frodi of Denmark.

Is there a connection between the Sampo and the manna-machine?

As we can see many of these identification marks of the Sampo are very much alike the descriptions of "The Ancient of Days" or a manna-machine as postulated by George Sassoon and Rodney Dale (2). These descriptions have also much in common with the Baphomet-cult of the Templars, which has also been connected with the manna-machine -tradition together with the Grail-legend as postulated by Johannes and Peter Fiebag (3).

I offer for consideration that it is possible that the Sampo could be one continuation and addition to this supposed manna-machine - Baphomet - Grail -tradition. Already Lönnrot suggested that the Sampo is an image of a god. Since then many other scholars have connected it with the mystical divine statue. For some reason many artists, when they are depicting the Sampo, put a bearded face of a man on the outside of it. Baphomet (supposed to have been a some kind of idol) also had a beard, which probably were strings and wires of the manna-machine according to Sassoon and Fiebags. Even the Finnish name "sampo" is quite close to the name "Baphomet" or "sophia" (=wisdom). Wisdom was one of the most common names of the supposed manna-machine. Nobody can surely say what "sampo" exactly means. There has been some etymological connections which could suggest that one of the meanings of it could be "wisdom". Etymological roots like "sammās", "sampas" or "sammakko" have also technological meanings like mill, statue, golden or stone column.

Professor Matti Klinge (4) from Helsinki University, who does not support any manna-machine or Grail -theories, states that the Sampo-poems are a part of medieval and Central European world of ideas, which have extended to Finnish mythology through Baltic countries,

especially through Estonia. According to Professor Klinge the Sampo-poems have real historical roots. He thinks that the Sampo was a statue alike the German Rolandssäule. I think that it is possible that the Sampo could as well symbolize Baphomet. Of course this is only theoretical speculation, but there are some interesting links between these two mystical objects that cannot be ignored.

There still remains the question how then could this medieval tradition have come into the Finnish mythology? As we know when the Order of the Temple was dissolved in 1312 by command of the Pope Clemens V, many Templars, who were not arrested, escaped to all possible directions. Many of them joined "der Deutsche Orden", which had in possession large areas in eastern Europe and in Balticum until 1561. Some pieces of their tradition could easily have spread to Finland and Karelia, because many of the German knights even lived in Karelia. According to most modern scholars, the Baltic influence, of the various influences, seems to have been the most radical in reshaping the Finns' (and the Estonians') style of singing. A further evidence of the Baltic influence is that the Indo-European-speaking Balts-Latvians, Lithuanians, and the now extinct Old Prussians, have a form called the daina which strongly resembles what is now known as Kalevala metre. Of all Uralic-speakers only those in the Baltic region used this metre. So there are lots of indications that at least some parts of the Kalevala and possibly the Sampo-poems are a part of a medieval tradition that has come to Finland through Balticum perhaps from Central or Western Europe.

Epilogue

Then she (Louhi) reached for the Sampo
with her ring finger: she dropped
the Sampo in the water

felled all the bright-lid
down over the red craft's side
in the midst of the blue sea;
there the Sampo came to bits
and the bright-lid to pieces.

So some of those bits, those great
fragments of the Sampo went below the quiet waters
down to the black mud;
they were left for the water
treasures for Ahto-land's folk.

...
But some other bits
some smaller fragments were left
on the blue high seas
on the broad sea's waves
for the wind to lull
the billows to drive...

...
Steady old Väinämöinen
saw the surf pushing
and the spray washing landward
the billow driving ashore
those bits of the dear Sampo
those pieces of the bright-lid.

He was delighted
and uttered a word, spoke thus:
"Out of this a seed will spring

constant good luck will begin..."

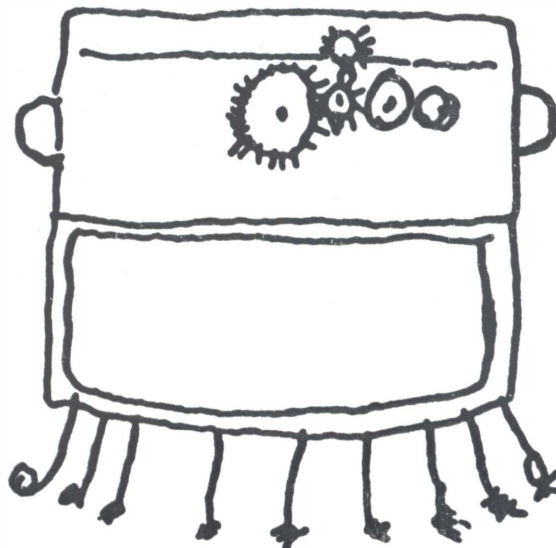
If the Sampo-poems are a part of the manna-machine - Grail-tradition, what conclusions could we draw from them? Unfortunately not much, because according to the Kalevala-epic there was a fight between the Louhi's men from Pohjola and the men from Kalevala at the sea. The Sampo sank into the sea and went to pieces. So at least that proves that it could not entirely have been made of wood. Also according to the Kalevala-epic the waves washed ashore some pieces of the Sampo around the world and the hero Väinämöinen tried to collect them.

Is this sea-adventure somehow connected with the fact that the Templars took their own valuables, i.e. possibly Baphomet and other treasures, and transported them to La Rochelle or some other place to be shipped away, so that the French king Philip the Fair couldn't get hold of them. Maybe the Kalevala is telling us that the Sampo (=the manna-machine) is now at the bottom of the sea or perhaps some pieces of it are scattered around the world in some secret hiding-places, which perhaps were important places to the Templars and which might be important to the heirs of them, especially to the Freemasons and the Rosicrucians. So maybe we should not try to find a whole manna-machine but instead some particles of it possibly from the relics of the Christian, Jewish or Muslim shrines or from other holy places.

References:

- (1) Kalevala, (Finnish edition). Mikkeli 1985.
The Kalevala, (translated by Keith Bosley). Oxford 1989.
- (2) George T. Sassoon and Rodney Dale, The Manna-Machine.
London 1978.
George T. Sassoon and Rodney Dale, The Kabbalah Decoded.
London 1978.
- (3) Johannes und Peter Fiebag, Die Entdeckung des Grals.
Munich 1989.
- (4) Matti Klinge, Muinaisuutemme merivallat. Keuruu 1983.

(c) Kalevi Mikkonen



A Karelian singer Risto Tapionkeski made this picture of the Sampo in the year 1921. The Sampo is depicted as a mechanical device.

Research Institute on Anomalous Phenomena (RIAP) has been established in 1992 by the VERTICAL Aerospace Company. It is an independent research body, aimed at scientific studies in the fields of bioastronomy and non-classical SETI (Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence). The Institute makes its investigations in strict conformity to requirements of the scientific method and in close collaboration with the CIS Academy of Cosmonautics and the Russian Academy of Sciences.

As it is known, bioastronomy is an interdisciplinary scientific field of research, aimed at search for life and intelligence in the Universe. This field involves a range of scientific disciplines, with astrophysics and cosmology holding the central position. Cosmology provides bioastronomy with theoretical justification of models of the evolution of the Universe from the Big Bang to the rise of life and intelligence; astrophysics and radio astronomy provide it with methods of the search for extrasolar planetary systems and cosmic civilizations. The latter task is commonly referred to by the abbreviation SETI. This is a fundamental scientific problem, having a long prehistory. But it has been only in the last 30 years that sophisticated radio astronomical equipment came into being, which enabled real experiments in this domain. These have been mainly searches for repetitive sequences of narrow-band radio or optical pulses transmitted (as the researchers hope) from the outskirts of Solar-like stars. However, by this time such attempts have not been successful (which made some authors conclude that ET civilizations do not exist).

But is this "classical" approach the only possible way of the ETI quest? It is hardly so. In fact, we cannot consciously choose the optimal SETI strategy only on the basis of purely theoretical considerations. Some alternative (or non-classical) approaches to this problem may have even a greater potential than the classical strategy.

To increase the likelihood of successful solution of the SETI problem, it is essential to supplement the search for interstellar signals with the search for alien artifacts (space bases, extraterrestrial probes, various technical devices, etc., or their remnants) in the Solar System. One of the most promising sites for such a search is the Moon. This atmosphere-free satellite is, by its very nature, a potential "reserve" of possible traces of extraterrestrial visitations over a period of several billions of years. Even though at present there are no active ET devices on the Moon, the very long period of the "accumulation of traces" allows us to anticipate finding them. On the contrary, if, after extensive exploration of the Lunar surface, the absence of any ET traces on the Moon is ascertained, it will imply that during the last billions of years intelligent life in the Galaxy has been (and probably is) a very rare phenomenon.

The Institute is carrying out the program "Search for Alien Artifacts on the Moon" (SAAM). This program includes:

a) search for sunlight reflections from flat (mirror-like) surfaces of hypothetical ET objects (e.g. reconnaissance devices monitoring the Earth);

b) search for other assumed artificial extraterrestrial phenomena on the Lunar surface;

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- c) consideration of the possibility of interaction between the terrestrial and extraterrestrial civilizations on the Moon;
- d) simulation of probable ETI strategies for the Moon.

These investigations employ photographs of various regions of the Lunar surface taken from "Apollo", "Lunar Orbiter", "Luna" and "Zond" spacecraft, as well as the existing catalogues of Lunar Transient Phenomena (LTP) and the data obtained by the network of LTP observers that have been recently set up by the Institute specially for this purpose. The network involves at present a group of competent observers in Ukraine, Russia and Byelarus.

The Institute staff consists of RIAP Fellows - the scientists and scholars, permanently employed by the Institute, and RIAP Contributing Fellows, who are temporarily engaged under contracts. They are distinguished specialists in physics, astronomy, history, psychology, and other disciplines.

The Scientific Council and Advisory Board of the Institute include such Russian and Ukrainian specialists in the SETI field as A.V.Arkhipov (radio astronomer who has discovered supposed ETI radio sources near some distant stars), Dr. V.N.Fomenko (investigator of the famous Vashka find, as well as other supposed ET artifacts), Dr. L.M.Gindilis (astronomer and SETI expert), Dr. Yu.V.Platov (Vice-Chairman of the Academic Research Group on Anomalous Phenomena), Dr. A.D.Ursul (President of the CIS Academy of Cosmonautics), Dr. A.V.Zolotov (investigator of the Tunguska explosion), and others. Dr. V.V.Rubtsov has been appointed the Director of the Institute.

RIAP is starting two special periodicals: journal "Anomalistics and Astronomy" (in Russian) and newsletter "RIAP Bulletin" (in English), as well as non-periodical "RIAP Proceedings".

The budget of the Institute is formed from subsidies of VERTICAL; payments for research works, performed by RIAP for other organizations; grants and donations. Thanks to the VERTICAL Aerospace Company, the Institute has got a sufficient funding in the Ukrainian currency, what enabled the beginning of its research activities. However, some (limited in the number, but important) equipment, materials and services may be obtained here mainly or even exclusively for dollars or another hard currency, not for Russian roubles or Ukrainian kupons. The lack of these means (however small) impedes considerably the work of RIAP.

In this connection, *the Scientific Council of the Institute appeals to the international bioastronomical community for any possible donations in a free convertible currency.* Any financial help on your part will be most highly appreciated and will serve for the benefit of our common field of study, promoting its further development.

These donations may be sent here by money transfer through Credit Lyonnais SA & Co. (Deutschland) OHG, Neuer Mainzer Strasse 75, Postfach 17 02 61, 6000 Frankfurt am Main 17, correspondents account No. 02.171439.001.00.0.49 of Commercial Bank "Promin", payable to Vladimir V. Rubtsov, Chernishevskogo 88/66, Kharkov 310023, Ukraine.

The Scientific Council is also very much interested in establishing contacts and collaboration between RIAP and bioastronomical bodies, journals, researchers from other parts of the world. For further details please write to: RIAP, P.O.Box 4884, 310022 Kharkov-22, UKRAINE. Fax: (057-2) 79-11-11. E-mail: riap%office.kharkov.ua@relay.ussr.eu.net